

GETTING STARTED PACKET

Fall 2004

The enclosed information will help you legally operate a business in Houston and Harris County. Some permits (especially for GENERAL CONTRACTORS) must be obtained on a job-by-job basis. GENERAL CONTRACTORS ARE NOT LICENSED IN HOUSTON. Please contact individual city departments when obtaining individual job-based permits- www.ci.houston.tx.us/departments.htm

The COH Planning Dept. (713-837-7701, 611 Walker St.) can help you determine whether your location satisfies COH minimum distance requirements. Auto sales and storage, sexually oriented businesses (SOB's), hazardous materials and the sale of alcoholic beverages are examples of the businesses that have distance requirements from residences, day cares, schools, and churches. Do NOT attempt to obtain city permits unless you can satisfy distance requirements. City ordinances are available from the City Secretary at 713-247-1840.

THE ONE STOP BUSINESS CENTER ASSUMES NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR FAILURE TO OBTAIN ALL NECESSARY OPERATING PERMITS, OR FOR THE SEQUENCE IN WHICH YOU OBTAIN SUCH PERMITS. Information on professional affiliations, memberships, non-governmental certifications, insurance, or bonding not included herein. Please bring inaccuracies to our attention.

FREE SCORE BUSINESS COUNSELING @ ONE STOP DOWNTOWN!!

www.scorehouston.org

The ONE STOP BUSINESS CENTER has **FREE** 1-on-1 business counseling for new and first stage businesses at its conveniently located City Hall Annex location, Downtown Houston. **CALL TODAY for an appointment** with our SCORE business advisors who can steer your business on the path to success. You'll learn about business planning, discuss strategies, financing options, and other topics of importance to your business.

Monday, Wednesday, Friday @ 2:00 pm & 3:00 pm

(See over for directions)

CALL 713-247-2982 (TDD: 713-247-1001)

ONE STOP BUSINESS CENTER

LOCATION: CITY HALL ANNEX, 900 Bagby St. @ McKinney (Public Level)
PHONE: 713-247-2982; FAX: 713-247-2710; TDD: 713-247-1940 or 7-1-1
WEBSITE: www.ci.houston.tx.us/citygovt/mayor/osbc
E-MAIL: onestopbusinesscenter@cityofhouston.net



INFORMATION ABOUT ASSUMED NAMES IN TEXAS

IF I FILE AN ASSUMED NAME WITH THE SECRETARY OF STATE OR WITH THE COUNTY CLERK DOES THIS MEAN NO ONE ELSE WILL BE ALLOWED TO USE THE NAME?

No. Registration of an assumed name does not give the registrant any right to the use of the assumed name when that use would be contrary to the common law or statutory law of unfair competition, unfair trade practices, or common law copyright or similar law. The secretary of state will accept a filing of an assumed name certificate as notice of intent to use of the assumed name without determining whether the registrant has the right to the use of the name. Consequently, there may be the same assumed name on file by more than one organization.

The purpose of the assumed name filing is to provide notice that a business or profession is being conducted under a name that may not clearly identify the owners or participants and to provide further information on the identity and location of such owners or participants. Generally, every business must protect its own business name and the good will that it has acquired from the sale of its goods or services in a specific geographic area.

SOURCE: www.sos.state.tx.us/corp/businessfaqs.shtml

GET CERTIFIED!!!

The Mayor's Office of Affirmative Action and Contract Compliance (AACC) provides quality certification, compliance, business development, and training programs to promote equal employment and economic opportunity at every level of City government. To increase opportunities for minority and women business owners to participate in City contracting, the City of Houston has implemented a Minority/Women Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (M/W/DBE) program.

Firms wishing to participate in the M/W/DBE program must be certified by the AACC, which maintains and distributes the M/W/DBE Directory. The Directory is issued to all City departments and to prime contractors to assist them in making good faith efforts to meet M/W/DBE goals.

The City's M/W/DBE goals are: construction, 17 percent; purchasing, 11 percent; and, professional services, 24 percent. The AACC administers similar programs for federally-designated Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs) and Persons with Disabilities Business Enterprises (PDBEs).

Firms wishing to become certified can attend a pre-certification workshops, offered every Thursday at 2:00 p.m. at the AACC office, 611 Walker, 20th Floor. For more information, call AACC at 713.837.9000.

SOURCE: www.ci.houston.tx.us/citygovt/mayor/aacc/

BRAZORIA CO. CLERK	979-849-5711	(TDD: 7-1-1)
FORT BEND CO. INFO	281-342-3411	(TDD: 281-341-3799)
GALVESTON CO. CLERK	409-766-2200	(TDD: 7-1-1)
HARRIS CO. TAX ASSESSOR	713-224-1919	(TDD: 7-1-1)
HARRIS COUNTY	713-755-5000	(TDD: 713-755-5005)
MONTGOMERY CO. CLERK	281-353-9791	(TDD: 7-1-1)
STATE OF TEXAS	800-252-9600	(TDD: 512-475-3165)

DIRECTIONS & PARKING

ONE STOP BUSINESS CENTER, City Hall Annex, 900 Bagby St., Public Level.

Metered parking available in the City Hall Annex parking lot behind 900 Bagby, or next to City Hall on McKinney and Walker. Garage parking available in the Theater District. (Tranquillity Garage Entrance #2 in the 500 block of Rusk, connected by tunnel to City Hall basement). **WHEEL CHAIR ACCESSIBLE.**

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Fall 2004

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**THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE AVAILABLE ONLY ON
OUR CITY OF HOUSTON WEBSITE!!**

www.ci.houston.tx.us/citygovt/mayor/osbc (pdf file)

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MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

HOUSTON ONE STOP BUSINESS CENTER
P.O. BOX 1562, HOUSTON, TEXAS 77251; PH: 713-247-2982

BUS. _____

CONTACT THESE 3 AGENCIES FIRST:

1) HARRIS COUNTY CLERK 713-755-6436

www.cclerk.hctx.net/PersonalRec/assumnam.htm

PERMIT: ASSUMED NAME OR "DBA" (\$15+ PROCESSING FEE- CASH).

1001 Preston, 4th Floor (CALL FOR OTHER LOCATIONS). An Assumed Name, or DBA, is required to be filed in every Texas county in which you transact business. A DBA IS A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT - IT DOES NOT RESERVE A NAME AND OTHERS MAY EVENTUALLY USE THE SAME NAME. It is valid for ten (10) years and must be filed for in-person. **FORT BEND Co. (281-341-8652), MONTGOMERY Co. (281-353-9791 x7885), BRAZORIA Co. (281-331-6101), GALVESTON Co. (409-766-2200).**

2) TEXAS STATE COMPTROLLER 1-800-252-5555; TDD: 1-800-248-4099

www.cpa.state.tx.us & www.cpa.state.tx.us/taxinfo/tollfree.html (Toll Free Numbers)

PERMIT: TEXAS SALES TAX PERMIT (NO FEE).

1919 North Loop West @ Ella (4 Houston offices). Texas levies a 6.25% tax on sales of tangible personal property, some types of labor and services. A SALES TAX PERMIT and SALES TAX BOND is required of businesses selling, renting, leasing or providing taxable items or services. The FRANCHISE TAX is collected from corporations. Taxes on amusement machines, motor fuels, minerals, vehicle tires & batteries, and motor vehicles are collected. Inquire about the Resale Certificate for resellers, and the Exemption Certificate. **OPERATING W/O A SALES TAX PERMIT IS A CRIME PUNISHABLE BY A FINE OF UP TO \$500 FOR EACH DAY A BUSINESS OPERATES WITHOUT A PERMIT.**

3) INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE 1-800-829-1040; TDD: 1-800-829-4059

www.irs.gov/businesses

FILING: EMPLOYER ID NUMBER, FEDERAL TAX ID NUMBER

1919 Smith St. (1st Floor). File an "SS-4", or Employer ID Number (EIN) Application Form if you pay wages to one or more employees. Sole proprietors with no employees can also use their SSN. Corporations, partnerships, or non-profits must have EIN's (ask for Publication 583 and 1635). **IRS registers NON-PROFIT 501(c)(3) organizations (Ask for forms 1023,1024,8718).** Call pre-recorded TELE-TAX line at 713-541-3400. Call 1-800-772-1213 for SOCIAL SECURITY and MEDICARE information. Non-resident aliens must have a valid visa and SSN to transact business in the US. Small business seminar information can be obtained at 713-209-3543. The Taxpayer Advocate is at 877-777-4778.

(After 1-1-05 contact) **HARRIS CO. APPRAISAL DISTRICT** 713-957-7800; TDD: 713-957-5660

www.hcad.org/Downloads

FILING: RENDITION OF BUSINESS PERSONAL PROPERTY

2800 North Loop West. Owners of business personal property as of **January 1** of each year must file a **RENDITION-** a listing of business personal property assets- between January 1 and April 15 of each year. Assets include inventory items, raw materials, leasehold improvements, machinery and other equipment, furniture and fixtures, computer equipment, and vehicles used for business purposes. Property must be located in the taxing jurisdiction for more than a temporary period. **FORT BEND Co. (281-344-8623), MONTGOMERY Co. (281-353-2186), BRAZORIA Co. (281-331-6101)**

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CITY / COUNTY REQUIREMENTS

HOUSTON ONE STOP BUSINESS CENTER, P.O. Box 1562, Houston, Tx. 77251 - PH: 713-247-2982

CONTACT THE AGENCIES CHECKED BELOW FOR DETAILED PERMIT, LICENSE AND REGULATORY INFORMATION. BUSINESSES LOCATED OUTSIDE OF HOUSTON CITY LIMITS OR HARRIS COUNTY MUST CONTACT THEIR CITY HALL OR COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE FOR OPERATING REQUIREMENTS. AGENCIES CHECKED BELOW ARE BASED ON YOUR ANSWERS TO OUR QUESTIONNAIRE. (TDD numbers for the hearing impaired are listed when available.)

CITY OF HOUSTON CODE OF ORDINANCES WEBSITE:

www.cityofhouston.gov (Click CODE OF ORDINANCES BUTTON)

☐ **CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY (CO): 713-535-7730 (Planning Dept.)**

3301 Travis, 1st Floor. A Certificate of Occupancy must be obtained before a commercial building or an individual lease space within a commercial building may be occupied, or if changes to an existing occupancy classification are made. If no Certificate of Occupancy is posted the owner or agent will be given a 10-day notice to make an application and pay inspection fees. If the owner or agent fails to comply, citations may be issued each day until the application is made and fees are paid. Residential dwellings, residential garages, sheds, and residential carports are exempt from certificates of occupancy. If you are uncertain about whether or not your building or lease space requires a Certificate of Occupancy or a Life Safety Certificate, please call the Occupancy Inspection Section at (713) 535-7730. A CO is **NOT** currently required in unincorporated HARRIS COUNTY (www.eng.hctx.net)

☐ **BUILDING PERMIT (also Demolition Permits): 713-535-7732 (Planning Dept.)**

www.ci.houston.tx.us/departme/planning/planning_dev_web/code_enf/fees.htm

3300 Main St, 1st Floor. Must be obtained prior to issuance of CO (Above). Plan review conducted for plumbing, structural, elevator, electrical, storm water, HVAC, and other systems, in addition to compliance with the Landscaping Ordinance. Applicant may also need an inspection for electrical, mechanical, and plumbing systems. ASBESTOS contractors must contact the Air Quality Control Bureau at 713-640-4200 for applicable regulations. Houston uses the 2002 International Building Code with local amendments (available by calling 713-535-7737). Elevators and escalators are regulated by the Texas Dept. of Licensing & Regulation. *Development in unincorporated HARRIS COUNTY requires a "Development Permit" from Harris County Engineering (713-956-3000- www.eng.hctx.net/permits).*

☐ **FOOD DEALERS, HANDLERS PERMITS: 713-794-9200 (Health Dept.)**

www.ci.houston.tx.us/departme/health/foodpagetest.html

8000 North Stadium Dr. (north of Astrodome). Food service businesses including caterers, restaurants, mobile food units, day care centers, manufacturing, packaging etc., require permits and periodic inspection. Weekly Food Manager's Certification classes are \$45 (Initial) or \$30 (Renewal), call 713-247-5245. A FREE facility inspection program is available for persons leasing or buying an existing food service business (Obtain free inspection first). For WIC Program information, call 713-794-9095, for Grease Trap inspections call 713-640-4283. *In HARRIS COUNTY call 713-439-6270; In FORT BEND CO. call 281-342-7469.*

☐ **COMMERCIAL PERMITTING & ENFORCEMENT SECTION: 713-837-9555 (F&A)**

611 Walker, 2nd Floor. Permits are issued yearly for sale of Second-Hand Merchandise; Roadside Vendors (*Roadside Vendors are NOT ALLOWED on public rights-of-way in unincorporated Harris Co. Call 713-755-5000*); Charitable Solicitation; Antique Dealers; Alcoholic Beverages; Amusement & Game Machines (Non-Food); Flea Markets; Dance Halls; Scrap Dealers; Mini Warehouses; Loudspeaker Operation & Others. The **TRANSPORTATION DIV.**, 601 Sawyer, (713-865-4297) regulates Wreckers, Jitneys (new regulations), Taxis, Limos & School Buses, and Valet Parking Services. *In HARRIS COUNTY call 967-5870 for Wrecker Permits. For Property Liens, call 713-837-9550. Hotel Occupancy Tax, call 713-837-0608. For Out-Of-Business permits, call the HCAD at 713-957-5627.*

☐ **SIGN PERMIT: 713-535-7900 (Planning Dept.)**

www.ci.houston.tx.us/departme/planning/planning_dev_web/code_enf/sign_qa.htm

3300 Main St., 2nd Floor. You must obtain a permit to erect on and off-premises signs of all types, including wall, roof, marquee, ground, projecting, spectacular, and temporary signs. Within Houston's ETJ, off-premise signs must also have a permit. *In HARRIS COUNTY call 713-956-3000 for sign regulations.*

☐ **HOUSTON FIRE MARSHALL: 713-865-7100 (HFD)**

2931 W. 12th St., The HFD issues permits for: Dumpsters; Storage, handling, and manufacture of flammable liquids and combustibles; Public Assembly (maximum occupancy); Tents; and Open burning. *In HARRIS COUNTY the County Fire Marshall (281-931-1085) enforces the State Insurance Code.* Harris County Pollution Control (713-920-2831) and the TCEQ (Formerly TNRC; 713-767-3500) must be notified in of a toxic waste spill.

☐ **SUBDIVISION & DEVELOPMENT PLATS: 713-535-7777 (Planning Dept.)**

Development Services checks for the proper subdivision of land and for adequate street or right-of-way, building lines and for compliance with the City's land development ordinance. Commercial projects are checked for compliance with off-street parking and tree and shrub requirements. The location of certain projects, such as hotels and motels, cell towers, and hazardous chemical storage is regulated by city ordinance and enforced by this division. **Subdivision plats** are required for developing or redeveloping most land within the Houston city limits and Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ). The ETJ is five miles out from the city limits. For applications and information about subdivision plats please call (713-837-7880, located at 611 Walker St., 6th floor. **Development Plats (DP)** are site plans that are required during the building permit process. DP's are required when there is development through new construction or enlargement of a building, structure or improvement within the city or ETJ. For applications call 713-535-7777, located at 3300 Main St.

For a No-Zoning Letter: www.ci.houston.tx.us/departme/planning/planning_dev_web/dev_regs/nozoning.pdf

☐ **BUREAU OF AIR QUALITY CONTROL: 713-640-4200 (Health Dept.)**

7411 Park Place Blvd., Suite 200. The Bureau has jurisdictions within the city limits. Enforces and conducts inspections of all facilities for compliance with federal and state air pollution rules and regulations. The Bureau is also responsible for City of Houston ordinances requiring registration and payment of annual permit fees. These fees are valid for one year and are non-transferable. See also TCEQ (P.6) & EPA requirements (P.9).

☐ **HOUSTON POLICE DEPT. (HPD) PERMITS: 713-308-1200 (HPD)**

Auto Dealers / Repair / Parts Sales (713-308-1440, 1200 Travis, 14th Floor); Auto Storage (713-247-5687); Pawn Shops (713-731-5964); Shooting Galleries/Ranges (281-230-2480); Firearms contact Federal BATF; Sexually Oriented Businesses (Vice Unit: 713-308-8600, **Please contact the City Secretary (713-247-1840) to get a copy of the City's SOB Ordinance before calling HPD.**

☐ **CITY OF HOUSTON SMOKING ORDINANCE: 713-640-4359 (Health Dept)**

www.ci.houston.tx.us/hlt/smokingpage.html

Enforces the No-Smoking Ordinance and the Cigarette Vending Machine Ordinances.

☐ **WASTEWATER CAPACITY RESERVATION: 713-535-7675 (Public Works Dept.)**

www.publicworks.cityofhouston.gov/utilities/docs/wwops.pdf

3300 Main St., 1st Floor. If you change or intensify the use of an existing building, or develop raw land you must apply for a WCR. Small, service oriented, or home-based businesses rarely require a WCR. For city industrial waste permits and pre-treatment information, call 281-575-2800. *In HARRIS or other counties, contact the applicable municipal utility district for water and wastewater availability and rates.*

CORPORATIONS, LIMITED PARTNERSHIPS & NON-PROFITS

☐ **SECRETARY OF STATE: 512-463-5555 or 512-463-5586**

Corporations Sect., P.O. Box 13697, Austin, Tx. 78711. Filing fee for the Articles of Incorporation is \$300.00. Registers Corporate Names, Limited Partnerships, Limited Liability Companies, Certificate of Authority, NON-PROFIT agencies, state-wide DBA's (Name), and others. **NOTARIES** call 512-463-5705. Other businesses regulated include: Athlete Agents & Auto Clubs, and Business Opportunities (512-475-1769); Health Spas, Membership Resorts & Camping, Credit Services, Wrestling Promoters, and Debt Collection (512-463-6906); **Telemarketing** (800-648-9642 for Non-Profits; 512-475-0775 for Others). For **Trademarks** call 512-463-5576.

PLEASE GO TO THESE PAGES WITHIN PACKET:

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| <input type="checkbox"/> See Page 11-12 | "EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES" |
| <input type="checkbox"/> See Page 17-18 | "DEED RESTRICTIONS AND HOME-BASED BUSINESSES" |

LOCAL & STATE REGULATIONS

HOUSTON ONE STOP BUSINESS CENTER, P.O. Box 1562, Houston, Tx. 77251 - Ph.: 713-247-2982

PLEASE CONTACT AGENCIES CHECKED BELOW FOR REGULATIONS, REQUIREMENTS, FEES, LOCATIONS AND PROCESSING TIMES. (Area codes are 713 unless noted; "800" denotes toll-free calls). **YOUR BUSINESS MAY BE REGULATED IN MORE THAN ONE CATEGORY.**

City of Houston (COH) / Harris County (HC) Agencies

www.ci.houston.tx.us/departments.htm (&) www.co.harris.tx.us

- **BURGLAR AND PANIC ALARMS (COH & HC)** Inside city limits, call the Houston Police Dept. for first-time applications, at 713-308-1400 (1200 Travis, 14th Floor). In HARRIS CO., call the Sheriff's Office (Alarm Detail) at 713-755-4600 for commercial and residential alarms.
- **HARRIS COUNTY BAIL BOND BOARD (HC)** (713-755-8040) 49 San Jacinto. Bail bond agencies.
- **HARRIS COUNTY TAX ASSESSOR (HC)** (713-224-1919) 1001 Preston. Amusement Machine Tags **ONLY** (no merchandise sold) (713-755-5900), Motor vehicle registration (713-368-2000), Disabled parking permits.
- **HARRIS COUNTY SHERIFF (HC)** (713-967-5795) Pawn Shops, Firearm sales. Sexually Oriented Business Permit (SOBP) (713-450-1623), Wrecker permits (713-967-5870, see also Texas DOT & the City of Houston).
- **EMS Bureau (COH- Health)** (713-558-3500) 1115 S. Braeswood. Regulates public and private ambulance and EMS providers.
- **PUBLIC HEALTH ENGINEERING BUREAU (COH)** (713-640-4399) 7411 Park Place. Hazardous Waste, Swimming Pools, Landfills, Underground Storage Tanks (incl. gasoline stations & dry cleaning), Sewage Treatment Plants, Restaurant Grease Traps, Auto Washing and Detailing (call for details).
- **OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH BUREAU (COH)** (713-640-4359) 7411 Park Place. Indoor air pollution sources, Radiation, Infectious & Medical Waste, Licensed Funeral Homes, Lasers & Laser Beam Shows, Microwaves, Lead-based paint.
- **BUREAU OF ANIMAL REGULATION & CARE (COH)** (713-238-9600) Kennel licensing, assistance dogs. In HARRIS CO. call 281-999-3191.
- **TRAFFIC & TRANSPORTATION DIV. (COH)** (713-837-7280) 611 Walker, 5th Floor. Parade, parking, barricade, street closing, sidewalk cafes, and curb numbering contractor permits.
- **NEIGHBORHOOD PROTECTION TEAM (COH)** (713-525-2525, Complaints) 2636 South Loop West. Building demolition, weed control, neighborhood nuisances.

CALL FOR LOCATIONS, FEES, AND REQUIREMENTS, or visit:

www.ci.houston.tx.us/departme/planning/planning_dev_web/code_enf/fees.htm#new

(713 area codes)

AC/BOILER INSPECTIONS	535-7755	PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT	837-7707(W)
BUILDING PERMITS/LICENSES	535-7800	PLAN REVIEW (Permits/records)	535-7548
PLUMBING INSPECTIONS	535-7700	EARTH HAULING PERMITS	535-7740
STRUCTURAL INSPECTIONS	535-7800	SPRINKLERS (Building)	535-7700
ELECTRICAL INSPECTIONS	535-7600	TRAFFIC ENGINEERING	535-7579
ELEVATOR INSPECTIONS	535-7755	WASTEWATER (Sewer)	535-7675
FLOOD PRONE AREAS	535-7605	WATER (Taps & meters)	535-7679
HEALTH DEPT. (PLAN REVIEW)	535-7772	STATIONARY ENGINEERS	535-7755
MECHANICAL INSPECTIONS	535-7755		
MICROFILM RECORDS	535-7726		

State of Texas Agencies 800-888-0511

www.texasonline.com

www.tded.state.tx.us/guide/GENERALBUSINESSREGULATIONS.html

ENVIRONMENTAL AGENCIES

- ☐ **TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY (Formerly TNRCC)** (713-767-3500 or 1-800-648-3927) *The SMALL BUSINESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (800-447-2827) assists businesses in complying with the Federal Clean Air Act. The TCEQ regulates manufacturers, auto dealers, engine repair shops, auto body shops, dry cleaners, printers, waste hauling, a/c service, printing shops, furniture mfg. and repair, metal fabrication and finishing, refineries, auto inspection, gasoline stations, septic tank systems, bakeries and others. TCEQ also enforces storm water discharges from construction sites under the TPDES Construction Permit (developments as small as 1 acre). City of Houston businesses also contact the Air Quality Control Bureau at 713-640-4200. For landfill regulations, hazardous waste storage & transportation, tire disposal/recycling, waste processing or disposal facilities, call 713-767-3500 or 512-239-6665.*
- ☐ **GENERAL LAND OFFICE** (512-475-1575) *Oil Spill Prevention & Response Plan. Coastal facilities that handle oil must have a prevention and clean-up plan approved by GLO.*
- ☐ **RAILROAD COMMISSION** (713-869-5001). *Oil and Gas Division (Mining activities, and natural gas dealers and handlers). Pipeline Safety Division regulates wells and audits gas utilities (713-869-5769).*

TRANSPORTATION & MOTOR VEHICLES

- ☐ **AVIATION, Department of** (512-416-4500). *Air fields, airports, state facilities.*
- ☐ **MOTOR VEHICLE BOARD** (713-681-6637). *Registration & title information. Motor vehicle dealers license (incl. motorcycles, trailers, etc.) (512-416-4800).*
- ☐ **PUBLIC SAFETY, Department of** (512-465-2000). *After-market auto glass tinting, Hazardous waste transport (512-873-3100). Vehicle Inspection Stations (281-272-1150). ATV and motorcycle instructor permit (512-465-2021).*
- ☐ **PUBLIC SAFETY, Department of (License Issuance Bureau)** (713-633-9872) *8825 West Tidwell and other Houston locations. Issues all private, commercial, and motorcycle driver's licenses. Call for hours and locations.*
- ☐ **TRANSPORTATION, Department of** (713-869-4571). *TXDOT controls access to state highways, oversize and overweight loads (including portable building transport, escort vehicles, and manufactured housing and oversized equipment), right-of-way leasing for billboards. Aviation and state facilities (512-476-9262). The **Motor Carrier Division** (800-299-1700 option 3) registers trucking: Vehicles over 26,000 pounds (cargo or passengers), 16+ passenger buses, Hazardous waste transporters, Wreckers, movers. For vehicle storage facilities call 512-463-8620. For oversized load permits within the City of Houston, call 713-754-0830.*

GENERAL PERMITS AND LICENSES

- ☐ **ADULT DAY CARE, NURSING, and PERSONAL CARE FACILITIES** (713-767-2700). *The Dept. of Human Services regulates Adult Personal Care, Day Homes, and Adult Foster Care Homes, some Halfway Houses and Group Homes, Long-term care facilities.*
- ☐ **AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT** (713-921-8200 or 1-800-835-5832). *Regulates Nursery Products and Floral items (incl. Short-term sales) (512-463-4583), Weights and Measures (issues seal for scales, gas pumps, etc.), Antifreeze Mfg. Permit. Enforces Texas Egg Law for egg handling (512-463-7583) and handling of Texas-grown vegetables (512-463-7604). Also regulates and licenses Fish Farms/Aquaculture (512-463-7583).*
- ☐ **ANIMAL HEALTH COMMISSION** (512-719-0700). *Regulates exotic livestock and fowl.*
- ☐ **ATTORNEY GENERAL** (512-463-2100) *Complaints, Raffles, Deceptive Trade. Consumer Protection Div. (713-223-5886).*
- ☐ **BANKING DEPARTMENT** (713-932-6146). *Automatic Teller Machines (ATM's), Pre-paid Funeral Service accounts, Perpetual Care Cemeteries, Currency Exchanges. Trust Company Loans/Investments (512-475-1300).*
- ☐ **CONSUMER CREDIT COMMISSION** (1-800-538-1579). *Regulates consumer installment loans, interest rates, credit card & store card issuance & pawn shops. Contact if you extend credit to customers.*
- ☐ **FEED & FERTILIZER CONTROL SERVICE** (979-845-1121). *Regulates feed, pet food and fertilizer manufacturers.*
- ☐ **HEALTH DEPARTMENT** (713-767-3000). *Licenses for Food and Drug Mfg., Shellfish Sanitation. For Milk and Dairy Product handling call 713-414-6125 x128.*

- ☐ **PARKS & WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT** (1-800-792-1112 TF). *Fur, Seafood Dealers- retail & wholesale, Hunting & Fishing Licenses (ask about new license program "Texas Outdoor Connection"). Also issues Fishing Guide permit. Boat Registration, call 1-800-262-8755.*
- ☐ **PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION** (512-936-7120 Office of Consumer Affairs). *Regulates Automatic Dial Announcing Devices (ADAD's), Long Distance Services, Telephone and Electrical Companies.*
- ☐ **RESIDENTIAL & DAY CARE LICENSING** (713-940-5200 or 1-800-862-5252). *Dept. Of Family and Protective Services regulates Child Day Care / Administrators, Adoption Agencies, drop-in care facilities, and group/family day care homes.*
- ☐ **SAVINGS AND LOAN DEPT.** (512-475-1350). *Regulates mortgage brokers and loan officers, banks.*
- ☐ **TEXAS MUSIC OFFICE** (Office of the Governor) (512-463-6666) *A clearinghouse for Texas music industry information. Provides referrals to Texas music businesses, talent and events to attract new business to Texas.*
[WEBSITE: www.governor.state.tx.us/music/index.htm]

PROFESSIONAL LICENSES

- ☐ **APPRAISER LICENSING & CERTIFICATION BOARD** (512-465-3950). *All real estate appraisers.*
- ☐ **ARCHITECTURAL EXAMINERS BOARD** (512-305-9000). *Interior Designers, Landscape Architects.*
- ☐ **BAR OF TEXAS, STATE** (1-800-204-2222). *Legal offices, law firms, paralegal (info only).*
- ☐ **BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL LAND SURVEYORS** (512-452-9427). *All surveyors and related activities.*
- ☐ **COSMETOLOGY COMMISSION** (1-800-943-8922). *Beauty, Nail Salons & Cosmetologists. Barbers call 1-888-870-8755.*
- ☐ **COURT REPORTERS CERTIFICATION BOARD** (512-463-1630).
- ☐ **DEAF AND HEARING IMPAIRED, COMMISSION FOR THE** (512-451-8494 or 1-800-332-3873). *Sign Language Interpreter certification.*
- ☐ **ENGINEERS REGISTRATION BOARD** (512-440-7723). *All types of engineers.*
- ☐ **FUNERAL SERVICE COMMISSION** (512-936-2474). *Regulates Morticians, Funeral Directors & Homes, Embalmers.*
- ☐ **GEOSCIENTISTS, BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL (New)** www.tbpg.state.tx.us *Regulates all geoscientists- professional certification required as of September 2003.*
- ☐ **HOUSING & COMMUNITY AFFAIRS, DEPT. OF** (800-500-7074). *Regulates manufacturers, retailers, installers, brokers, salvagers/rebuilders, and salespersons of manufactured housing in Texas (1-800-500-7074). Callers outside Texas: 512-475-2200.*
- ☐ **INSURANCE, DEPARTMENT OF** (800-252-3439 TF). *Insurance agencies, sales, continuing care facilities. Also regulates Amusement Rides & BUNGEE (512-322-3435), Adjusters & Title Insurers (512-322-4361), Bail bondsmen (512-322-3503).*
- ☐ **IRRIGATORS BOARD** (512-239-6719). *Lawn Sprinkler System Installers.*
- ☐ **LAND SURVEYING BOARD** (512-452-9427). *Land and property surveyors.*
- ☐ **LICENSING & REGULATION, Department of** (713-924-6300; 1-800-803-9202). *TDLR regulates: Auctioneers, AC & Refrigeration Contractors (also for duct cleaning and purchasing of refrigerant products), Boiler Operation & Inspection, Combative Sports, Court Interpreters, Career Counseling, **Electricians (new)**, Personnel Employment Services (Permanent Placement), Staff Leasing, Service Contract Providers, Talent Agents and Agencies, Industrialized Housing & Buildings and Property Tax Consultants. TDLR also regulates Elevators, Escalators, and their inspection (800-252-8026).*
- ☐ **PLUMBING EXAMINERS BOARD** (512-458-2145 or 800-845-6584). *All plumbers. See COH also.*
- ☐ **POLYGRAPH EXAMINERS BOARD** (512-464-2058)
- ☐ **TEXAS COMMISSION ON PRIVATE SECURITY** (512-424-7710). *Security System Consultants and sales, Installers, Dog Trainers, Alarm systems monitors, Security officers.*
- ☐ **PUBLIC ACCOUNTANCY BOARD** (512-305-7800). *Certified Public Accountants.*
- ☐ **REAL ESTATE COMMISSION** (512/465-3989 or 800-250-8732). *Agents / Brokers / Offices. For real estate Inspectors/professional inspectors call 512/465-3915.*
- ☐ **STATE FIRE MARSHALL** (512-918-7100). *Fireworks displays. Also regulates businesses involved in planning, certifying, leasing, selling, servicing, installing, monitoring, and maintenance of fire detection and fire alarm devices and systems, including fire extinguishers.*
- ☐ **STATE SECURITIES BOARD** (713-781-1094 or 512-305-8300). *Securities dealers & brokers, financial consultant or investment adviser permit. \$275 initial fee.*
- ☐ **STRUCTURAL PEST CONTROL BOARD** (512-451-7200).
- ☐ **VETERINARY MEDICAL EXAMINERS BOARD** (512-305-7555).

GENERAL REGULATORY AGENCIES

- ☐ **ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE COMMISSION (TABC)** (713-426-7900, 800-622-5991). *Alcohol retailers, Wholesalers, Restaurants, Breweries, Producers etc. Physicians or Lab Alcohol Permit (512-458-2500). See also the HARRIS COUNTY CLERK for various alcoholic beverage sales permits (713-755-6405).*
- ☐ **CONCEALED HANDGUN PERMIT, Dept. of Public Safety** (800-224-5744). *Includes personal concealed carry and instruction.*
- ☐ **EDUCATION AGENCY (Driver Training & Education Div.)** (512-997-6500) *Regulates and licenses driver education schools, driving safety schools, and related instructors.*
- ☐ **TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION (Career School Licensing)** (512-719-5244). *Proprietary Business Schools & Veterans Education Div. (512-936-3100). Driver's Education Trainers call 512-719-5247. All private and technical schools issuing a certificate for completion of course work must meet TEA requirements. For info on CHILD LABOR, call 512-463-8812.*
- ☐ **LOTTERY COMMISSION** (800-37-LOTTO). *Application for Lottery Retailer License, Charitable Bingo operation.*
- ☐ **PARDONS AND PAROLES BOARD** (512-406-5750). *Offender rehabilitation, Halfway houses.*
- ☐ **RACING COMMISSION** (512-833-6699). *Parimutuel racing and related professions, activities.*
- ☐ **STATE TREASURER** (800-862-2260). *Sale of tobacco products now licensed by the State Comptroller (800-862-2260). Ask about new posting rules for tobacco retailers and vending machines effective 1-1-98.*
- ☐ **STATE BOARD FOR EDUCATOR CERTIFICATION** (888-863-5880). *For Texas public and private school teachers.*
- ☐ **TEXAS ETHICS COMMISSION** (800-325-8506). *Lobbyists.*

HEALTH-RELATED LICENSES/SERVICES

- ☐ **CHIROPRACTIC EXAMINERS BOARD** (512-305-6700)
- ☐ **COMMISSION ON ALCOHOL & DRUG ABUSE** (512-349-6606). *Alcohol & substance abuse clinics, counseling.*
- ☐ **DENTAL EXAMINERS BOARD** (512-463-6400). *Issues and verifies licenses for Dentists, Dental Hygienists & Commercial Dental Labs.*
- ☐ **DIETICIANS EXAMINERS BOARD c/o TDH** (512-834-6601).
- ☐ **HEALTH DEPARTMENT** (713-767-3000- Region, 512-458-7111- State). *Areas regulated by TDH: Bedding Law (Upholstered Furniture), Youth Camps, Hazardous Substances (Glue, Paint, etc.); Paramedics; Athletic Trainers (512-834-6615); Massage Therapists (512-834-6616); Home Health Care Facilities (512-458-7240); Hospital Licensing (512-834-6645); Marriage & Family Therapists (512-834-6657); Midwives (512-458-7700); Nursing, Personal & Residential Care Homes (713-767-2200); Physical Therapists (512-305-6900); Professional Counselors (512-834-6658); Respiratory Care Practitioner (512-834-6632); Speech-Language Pathologists & Audiology (512-834-6627); Social Workers Examiners Board (1-800-232-3162); Tattoo Studios (512-458-7236); Licensed Medical Physicists (512-834-6655); Medical Radiologic Technologists (512-834-6617); Perfusionists (512-834-6602).*
- ☐ **HEARING AID FITTING AND DISPENSING BOARD c/o TDH** (512-834-6784)
- ☐ **MEDICAL EXAMINERS BOARD** (512-305-7030). *Physicians, including Acupuncture. Consumer complaints call 800-248-4062.*
- ☐ **NURSE EXAMINERS BOARD** (512-305-7400). *Nurse aid registry, medication aids (800-452-3934), Vocational nurses (512-305-8100).*
- ☐ **OPTOMETRY BOARD** (512-305-8500). *Optometrists, Opticians (512-834-6661 TDH) and contact lens dispensing, sales & service (512-834-4515 TDH). Vision screeners call 512-458-7420.*
- ☐ **PHARMACY BOARD** (512-305-8000). *Pharmacists, plus home health medication aide (512-834-6618).*
- ☐ **PODIATRY EXAMINERS BOARD** (512-305-7000). *Regulates professional podiatrists.*
- ☐ **PSYCHOLOGISTS EXAMINERS BOARD** (512-305-7700).
- ☐ **RADIATION CONTROL BUREAU c/o TDH** (713-767-3252; 512-834-6688). *Tanning Salons, X-ray machines. Licenses to possess or use radioactive materials are issued by the Low-Level Radioactive Waste Disposal Authority (512-451-5292).*
- ☐ **REHABILITATION COMMISSION, Houston Regional Office** (713- 735-3470 V & TDD or 1-866-281-1804). *The VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM regulates and serves people with a wide variety of disabilities and provides retraining activities, job placement assistance and counseling. See also Texas Health Dept. for Halfway Houses for the mentally impaired (713-995-1112).*

FEDERAL REGULATIONS

HOUSTON ONE STOP BUSINESS CENTER, P.O. Box 1562, Houston, Tx. 77251 - Ph. 713-247-2982

CONTACT THE FEDERAL AGENCIES CHECKED BELOW FOR REGULATIONS, ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS, FEES, LOCATIONS AND PROCESSING TIMES. PLEASE READ THIS ENTIRE DOCUMENT AND CONTACT THE AGENCIES BOTH CHECKED AND UNCHECKED AS NECESSARY.

FEDERAL AGENCY WEBSITE: www.lib.lsu.edu/gov/fedgov.html

FEDERAL RELAY SERVICE (FRS): www.fts.gsa.gov/frs/tollfree.htm

FOR IMPORT / EXPORT LICENSES:

- ☐ **U.S. CUSTOMS SERVICE:** 281-985-6700 (x 6814) (NEW!)

www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/import/

2350 N. Sam Houston Pkwy. E

IMPORT regulations on all goods brought into the U.S. Depending on the goods imported, other local, state and federal agencies may also apply, such as the US Dept. of Agriculture, the Fish and Wildlife Service, or the EPA. Customs Brokers are also licensed by the Texas State Comptroller (800-531-5441 x50381). All mail originating in foreign countries and U.S. overseas territories is subject to Customs examination upon entering the US.

- ☐ **INTERNATIONAL TRADE ADMINISTRATION (Export Assistance Center):** 713-454-8000

www.export.gov

Regulates all EXPORTING activities. The ITA provides industry and country analysis for businesses, and counseling through its Commercial Service. The ITA has a business library available to exporters in its Houston office. The Trade Information Center (TIC) can answer questions and assist new exporters via their 1-800-USA-TRADE.

FOR THE FEDERAL OPERATOR call 800-333-4636 (800-FED-INFO)

- ☐ **AGRICULTURE DEPT. (USDA):** 202-720-2791 (DC Main #). Animal & Plant Inspection & Quarantine (956-504-4150 Brownsville). Inspects foreign plants, plant products & byproducts for Import & Export. Food Safety Inspection Service, Import Meat Inspection (214-767-9116); Grain Inspection (281-338-2787); Fruit & Vegetable Div./Processed products (210-804-1478). FOOD STAMP SALES call 703-305-2286.
- ☐ **BUREAU OF ALCOHOL, TOBACCO & FIREARMS (BATF):** 281-449-5429 or 800-398-2282 for forms and applications. Regulates wholesaling, manufacture (incl. breweries and brew pubs), mfg., and Import/Export.
- ☐ **COAST GUARD MARINE INSPECTION OFFICE (DOT):** 713-671-5180. Tank, freight, vessel inspections.
- ☐ **COMMODITY FUTURES TRADING COMMISSION:** 202-418-5080. Commodities brokers and trading activities.
- ☐ **CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION:** 713-209-3447. The CPSC administers a wide range of product safety standards. Call 800-638-2772 for Toll Free recorded information.
- ☐ **COPYRIGHT OFFICE / Library of Congress:** 202-707-3000. Public Information Office. Forms & Applications Hotline (202-707-9100). **WEBSITE:** www.loc.gov/copyright/circs/circ22.
- ☐ **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA):** 281-983-2100. Regulates all pollution sources. See also the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (Airborne pollutants, hazardous waste transportation, storage and disposal). "Right-to-Know" Disclosure Info (800-535-0202). EPA SMALL BUSINESS REGULATORY HOTLINE (800-368-5888).
- ☐ **FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION (DOT):** 281-230-5300. Aircraft and facilities operations.
- ☐ **FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION (FCC):** 1-888-225-5322. Regulates radio & television, telephone (including 800, 888, and 900 numbers), telegraph, satellite communication, two-way radio, cable television, and computer

manufacturing. The Mobile Services Div. regulates cellular telephone networks. No FCC Houston office.

- ☐ **FEDERAL MOTOR CARRIER SAFETY ADMINISTRATION (DOT)** Issues USDOT Number for interstate trucking. Data Analysis & Information Systems, MC-RIS, 400 7th Street, SW, Washington, D. C. 20590, or fax it to 1-703-280-4003, or 2) call 1-800-832-5660 to request an MCS-150 to be mailed to you.
Website / FAQ: www.63.72.112.205/news.htm#adds
- ☐ **FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION (FTC):** 877-382-4357 (Regional Office/Dallas: 214-979-0213). The FTC regulates Mail Order (see Texas State Comptroller for Sales Tax collection requirements), Used Car Sales (Odometer setbacks), Care Labeling, Fair Packaging and Labeling, Consumer Leasing, Door-to-door sales, Appliance Labeling & Octane Posting, and other business activities such as Debt Collection and Advertising.
→ For information on Telemarketing and the Federal **DO NOT CALL** Registry, go to the following website:
www.ftc.gov/bcp/conline/edcams/donotcall/index.html
- ☐ **FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE INSPECTION OFFICE:** 713-672-4420. Regulates Import/Export of all fish & wildlife.
- ☐ **FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION (FDA):** NO HOUSTON OFFICE. (214-253-4952) Regulates food and drug manufacturing, labeling and sales. Also regulates the manufacture and use of medical devices, and radiation-emitting electronic products. Regulates pet food, animal drugs, feed, additives, and veterinary medical devices.
- ☐ **HOUSING & URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HUD):** 713-313-2274. Regulates mobile home manufacturing.
- ☐ **IMMIGRATION & NATURALIZATION SERVICE (INS):** 281-847-7900. SEE "Employer Responsibilities". For VISA's call 281-847-7900.
- ☐ **INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE (IRS):** 281-541-0440 or 713-643-8000. SEE "Minimum Requirements".
- ☐ **INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION:** ICC has been phased out.
- ☐ **JUSTICE DEPT. ANTITRUST DIVISION:** 202-514-2401. Antitrust laws apply to every phase of business, and prohibit practices such as price fixing, restraint of trade, and mergers that reduce competition.
- ☐ **MARITIME COMMISSION, FEDERAL:** 202-523-5707 (Houston office is closed). Regulates all ocean-based freight forwarding.
- ☐ **NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION (DOT):** 1-800-424-9393. Regulates motor vehicle and parts mfg. including replacement parts for motor vehicles. Auto Safety Hotline (800-424-9393 TF).
- ☐ **NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD:** 713-718-4632.
- ☐ **OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY & HEALTH ADMINISTRATION (OSHA):** 281-591-2438 or 281-286-0583
- ☐ **OFFICE OF HAZARDOUS MATERIALS TRANSPORTATION (DOT):** 202-366-0656. Also regulates pipeline safety from its Houston office (713-718-3950).
- ☐ **OFFICE OF LABOR MANAGEMENT STANDARDS:** 713-209-3135. Administers Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act, as well as labor union activities.
- ☐ **PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE:** 703-308-4357 (1-800-786-9199). General information on registering patents. Patent searches can be performed at the Rice University Patent Library (713-348-5483).
- ☐ **POSTAL SERVICE BUSINESS CENTER, U.S.:** 713-226-3350, 401 Franklin St. Call for Bulk Mail rates and regulations, Business Reply Mail, Bar Coding and Zip+4 Coding. FREE "POSTAL ANSWER LINE" at 1-800-725-2161.
- ☐ **SECURITIES & EXCHANGE COMMISSION:** 817-978-3821 (Fort Worth) (1-800-732-0330). Regulates investment advisors, securities dealers & brokers.
- ☐ **STATE DEPARTMENT, U.S.:** For Passports call the Automatic Appointment System at 713-751-0294. National Passport Information System: 1-888-362-8668 (\$5 charge).
- ☐ **TREASURY DEPT. (IRS):** 281-721-7741. Businesses having large currency transactions must follow specific record keeping and reporting procedures. This includes businesses such as: Check cashers, Travel agencies, Liquor stores, Food stores, Convenience stores, Currency exchanges, Money order issuers, Banks, Misc. retail, and Pawn shops.